

## **Prepared Remarks Concerning Accessibility at the new Yankee Stadium**

by

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I am here today: (1) to announce that the United States Attorney's Office has completed its review of the accessibility of the new Yankee Stadium under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and (2) to commend the New York Yankees for their exemplary work in making the new Yankee Stadium a model of accessibility for people with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act is, at heart, a civil rights law, meant to guarantee that people with disabilities have equal opportunities, including the opportunity to enjoy a sporting event as others do. For too long, there have been too many stadiums that make it difficult, unsafe, and sometimes virtually impossible for people with disabilities to attend, let alone enjoy, an event: from obstacles to getting in, out, and around the stadiums; to the lack of accessibility to amenities most take for granted like ticket counters, concession stands, and restrooms; to seats clustered in the least desirable areas and often with poor sight lines.

At a time when a lot of attention is being paid to bad corporate conduct, it is a pleasure to stand here today to talk to you about an example of good corporate citizenship. Instead of approaching accessibility as a matter of technically complying with the minimum required by law, the Yankees approached accessibility as a matter of doing the right thing in the right way.

The Yankees took the initiative, and voluntarily sought input from the United States Attorney's Office, as well as from representatives of groups committed to the interests of people with disabilities, from the outset *and* throughout the entire process – from the design, to the construction, to putting the final touches on the stadium as we approach the Yankees' first regular season home game. The Yankees' approach to accessibility is not only an example of good corporate citizenship, it is also – I would argue – an example of good business: it costs far more to fix a facility found to be inaccessible than it does to work together with the Government from the outset to ensure accessibility.

As a result of the Yankee's cooperative efforts, we believe that the new stadium is one of the most accessible sporting venues in the nation. The Yankees have graciously agreed to provide a tour of some of the accessible features of the new Stadium following the press conference. I would like to highlight a few of the key features:

Every entrance is accessible and there are accessible routes from each entrance to just about every space in the new Stadium. Accessibility extends to ticket windows, concession counters, restrooms, restaurants, and bars. The bullpens are accessible, and both the home and visiting dugouts have wheelchair lifts allowing access to the bench and playing field.

The new Stadium has a total of 506 wheelchair spaces, 530 companion seats, and 490 designated aisle transfer seats. Companion seats are designated seats next to wheelchair locations so that a wheelchair user can sit with family or friends. Aisle transfer seats are aisle seats with removable armrests so people can easily transfer to them from wheelchairs.

Accessible seating choices are dispersed throughout the Stadium and across all price points. The wheelchair locations also provide lines of sight over both seated and standing spectators comparable to those from nearby general seating locations.

For fans with hearing impairments, there is closed-captioning throughout the new stadium and assistive listening devices are available at no charge.

Yankee Stadium has long been a historic symbol of America's national pastime. Now, the new Yankee Stadium represents a historic achievement in accessibility.

Baseball is at its best when it breaks down barriers by embracing values we cherish as a nation – values like equality, empowerment, and teamwork. As a result of the Yankees' cooperative efforts, there is an equal opportunity for people with disabilities to enjoy the new stadium and appreciate the game. Whatever happens on the field, *that* exemplifies baseball at its best.